

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Triangle Communications New Judith Basin Telecommunications ROW
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2020
Proponent:	Triangle Telephone Cooperative Association, Inc
Location:	15N 12E 1 & 2, 16N 12E 34 & 17, 17N 11E 27 & 12, 17N 12E 24, 17N 13E 19
County:	Judith Basin
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of this EA is to assess the environmental impact of a new buried telecommunications easement on eight Trust lands sections in Judith basin county. All the work will be done along existing private roads, county roads, or state highways. This new cable would provide expanded, high quality, telephone and internet access to a rural community.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO) & Lewistown Unit Office, Real Estate Management Bureau
Proponent: Triangle Telephone Cooperative Association, Inc
Surface Lessees: Randal Ridgeway, Leonard Proctor, Hills Ranch, Helmak, Judith Basin County Commissioners, Jeff Mikeson
Other:

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all necessary permits for the proposed project, and settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant an easement for a new telecommunications cable.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant an easement for a new telecommunications cable.

A narrow strip of vegetation would be ripped up during construction but it will be in an area already disturbed by previous construction and reclaimed with hardy non-natives. Because of this the vegetation effects will most likely be minor and short lived. If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

No significant impacts to vegetation are anticipated.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

No significant impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic habitats are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Species of Concern 4 Species Filtered by the following criteria: Township = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)													TOWNSHIP = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)			4 SPECIES
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT						
<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i> Sprague's Pipit	Amphispizidae Pipits	G5	S1B	MHTA: BCC17	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	18%	67%	Grasslands					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: Although population trends in Montana appear to be relatively stable in recent years, populations have been in decline over the long run and the species faces threats from overgrazing, conversion, overgrazing, exotic plant invasions, altered fire regimes, and moving prior to functioning of county.																
<i>Calcarius ornatus</i> Chimney-collared Longspur	Calcariidae Longspurs and Snow Buntings	G5	S1B	MHTA: BCC17	BCC17	S	SE	SECH2	12%	67%	Grasslands					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: Species has a very low breeding population trend and faces threats from loss of native prairie grasslands and altered fire regimes. It is considered as a sensitive species.																
<i>Centurus bairdi</i> Baird's Sparrow	Passerellidae New World Sparrows	G4	S1B	MHTA: BCC17	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	2%	67%	Grasslands					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: Montana populations were declining until recently and the species is currently in jeopardy on the surrounding states and provinces.																
<i>Numenius americanus</i> Long-billed Curlew	Numeniidae Sandpipers	G5	S1B	MHTA: BCC17	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	19%	100%	Grasslands					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: The Northern Red-billed Curlew is currently listed as an "S2" species of concern in Montana because they are potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.																
Species of Concern 2 Species Filtered by the following criteria: Township = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)													TOWNSHIP = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)			1 SPECIES
BIRDS (AVES)													BIRDS (AVES)			
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT						
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> Golden Eagle	Accipitridae Hawks / Kites / Eagles	G5	S1	USFWS	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	2%	100%	Grasslands					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
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Species of Concern 4 Species Filtered by the following criteria: Township = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)													TOWNSHIP = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)			2 SPECIES
BIRDS (AVES)													BIRDS (AVES)			
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT						
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i> Hairy Bat	Vesperilionidae Bats	G5	S1	USFWS	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	2%	100%	Riparian and forest					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: Species is common and widespread, but under significant threat of catastrophic declines due to White-Nose Syndrome, a fungal disease responsible for the collapse of populations of this species in the eastern US.																
<i>Myotis lucifugus</i> Little Brown Myotis	Vesperilionidae Bats	G5	S1	USFWS	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	2%	100%	Generalist					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: Species is common and widespread, but under significant threat of catastrophic declines due to White-Nose Syndrome, a fungal disease responsible for the collapse of populations of this species in the eastern US.																
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BIRDS (AVES)													BIRDS (AVES)			
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT						
<i>Ardea herodias</i> Great Blue Heron	Ardeidae Egrets / Herons / Night-Herons	G5	S1	USFWS	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	2%	100%	Riparian forest					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: Initial breeding population size, evidence of recent decline, and declining reproduction of riparian wetland forest due to altered hydrology and grazing.																
Species of Concern 4 Species Filtered by the following criteria: Township = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)													TOWNSHIP = 017N012E (based on mapped Species Occurrences)			1 SPECIES
FISH (ACTINOPTERYGII)													FISH (ACTINOPTERYGII)			
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT						
<i>Chrosomus eos</i> Northern Red-belly Dace	Cyprinidae Minnows	G5	S1	USFWS	BCC17	S	SE	SECH1	2%	100%	Small prairie rivers					
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux.																
State Rank Reason: The Northern Red-belly Dace is currently listed as an "S2" species of concern in Montana because they are potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.																

There is an assortment of animal species of concern present across the townships the easements would cross. Most of the species of concern are not likely to be affected because all cables would be installed near roads or other places heavily used by humans. The areas affected are already degraded habitat and if the species are affected it will only be temporarily due to the short term nature of the construction.

No significant impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources are anticipated, though temporary displacement of local wildlife may occur during the project.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project will not create or eliminate any jobs, so no significant effects to the employment market are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will not be any significant increases in traffic, school attendance, or need for fire and police protection if this project is approved.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

All of the proposed new cable is along existing roads which already have no recreational value. There will be no significant direct or cumulative effects on access to or quality of recreation and wilderness activities because of this project.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

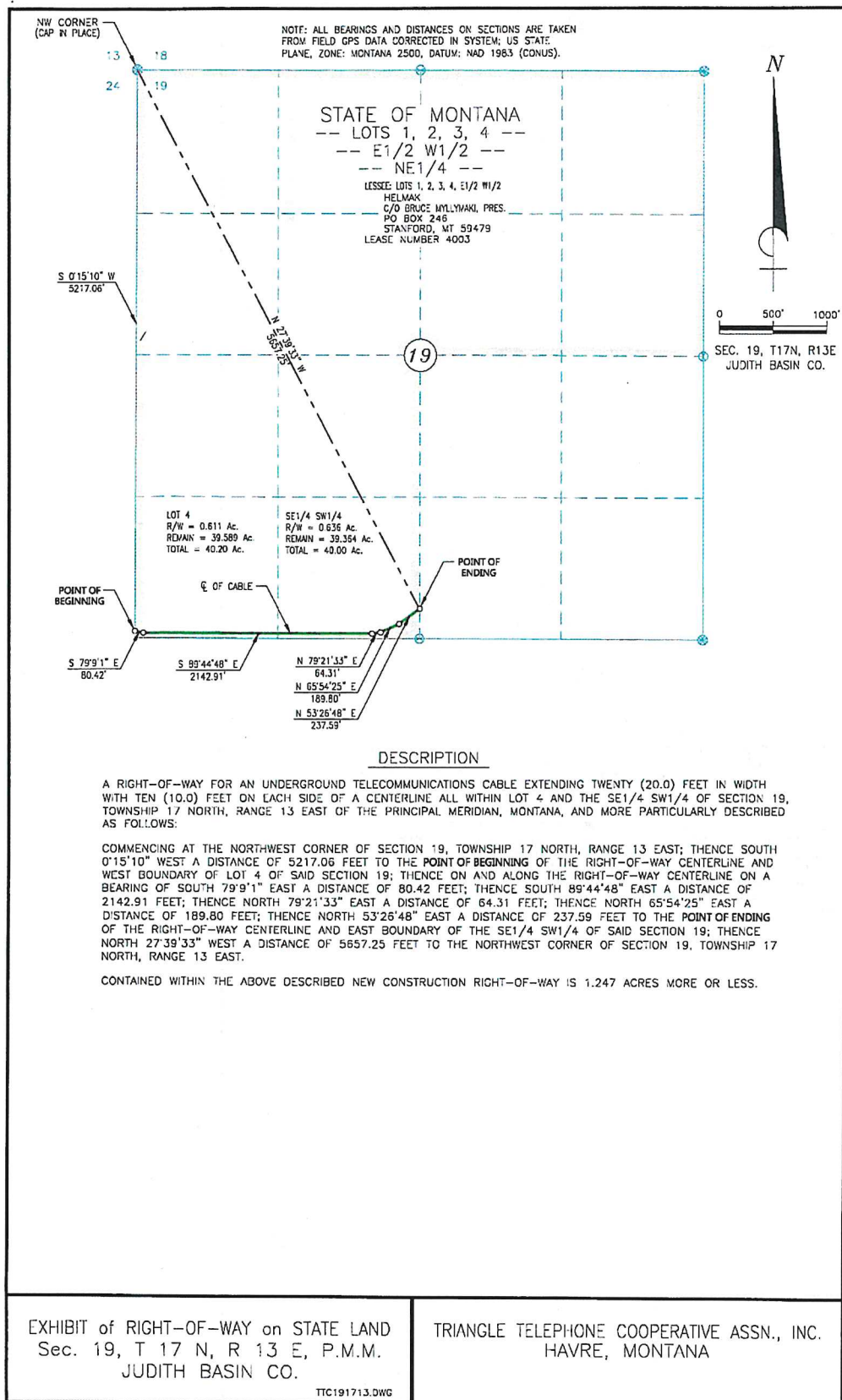
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

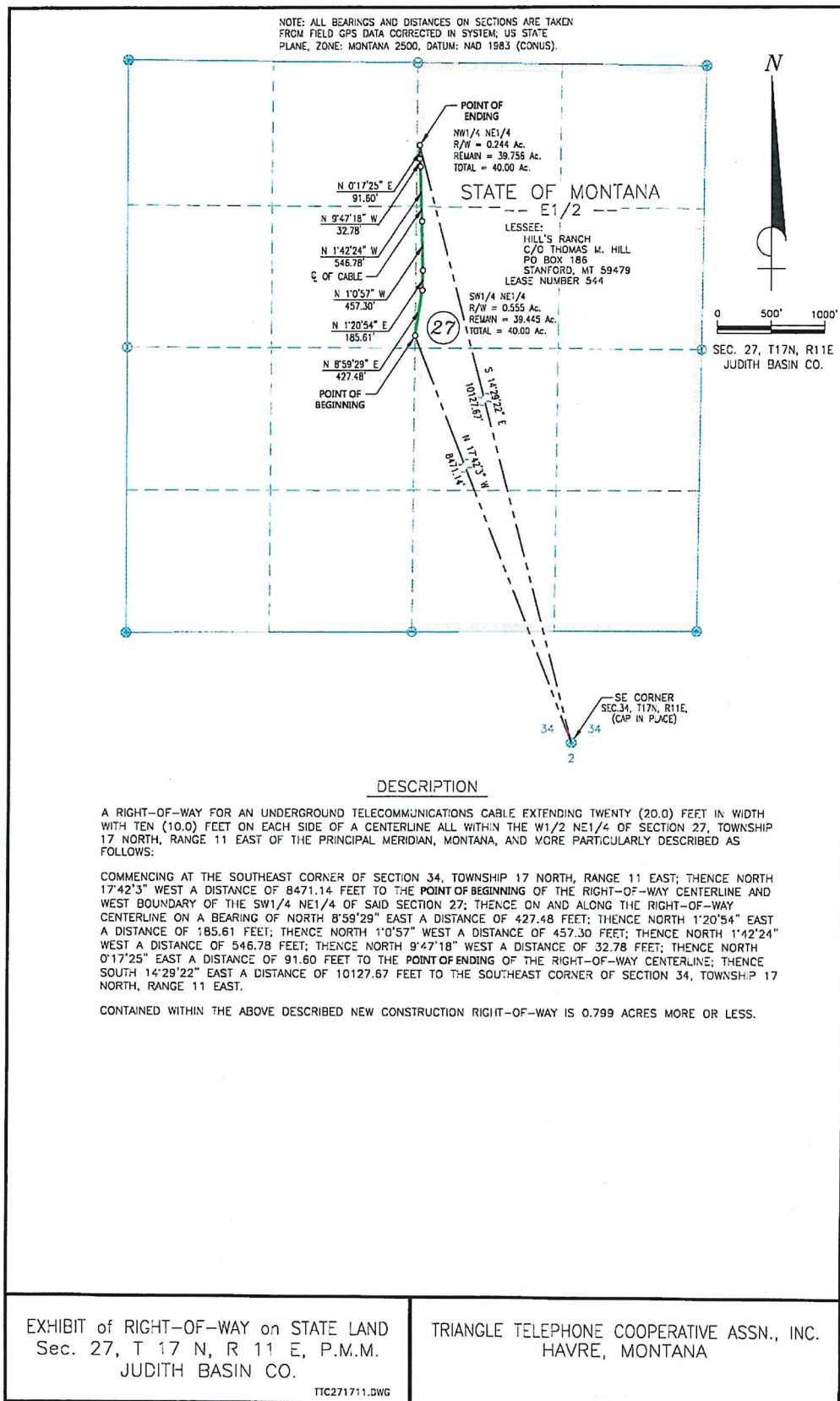
There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be significantly impacted by the proposal.

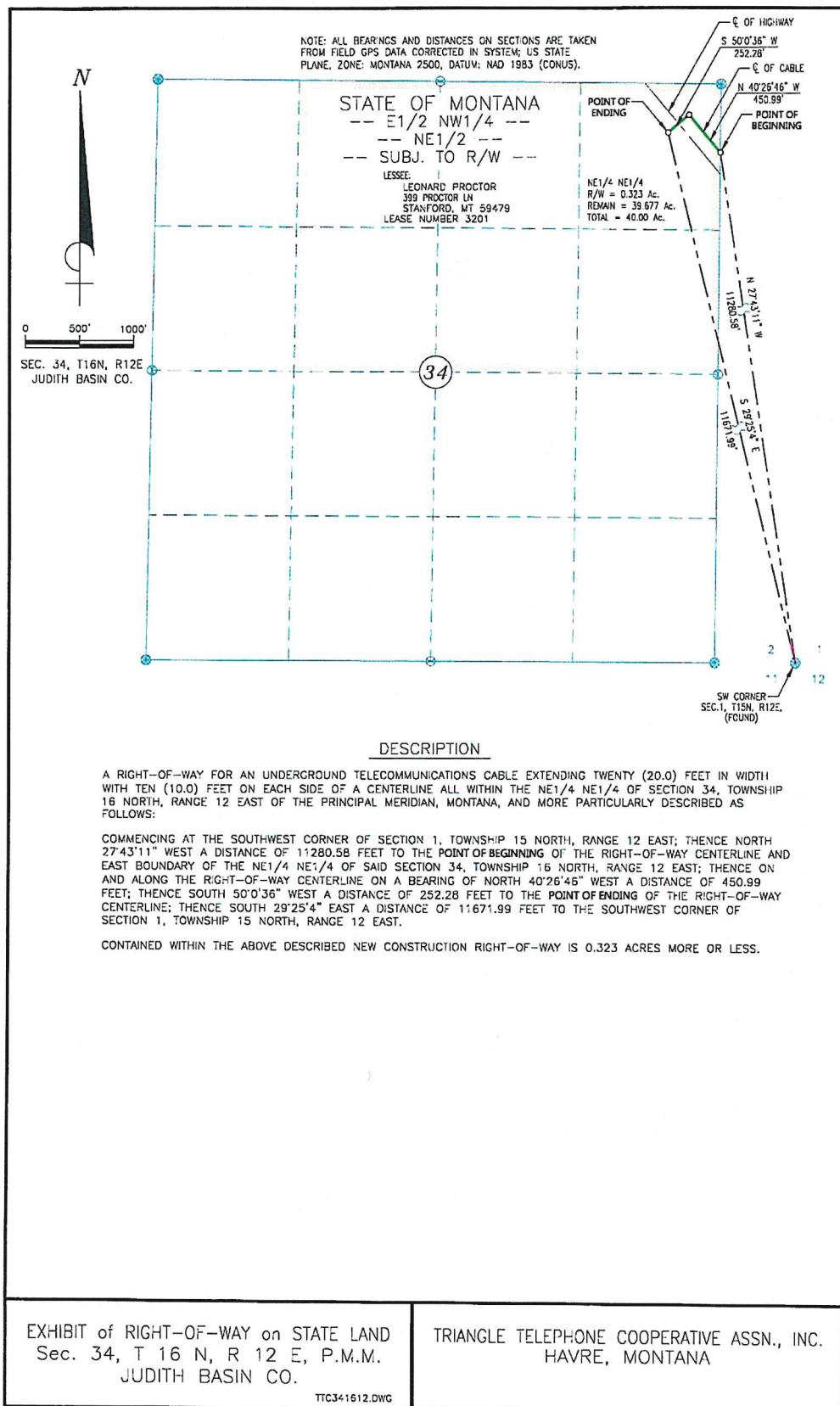
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

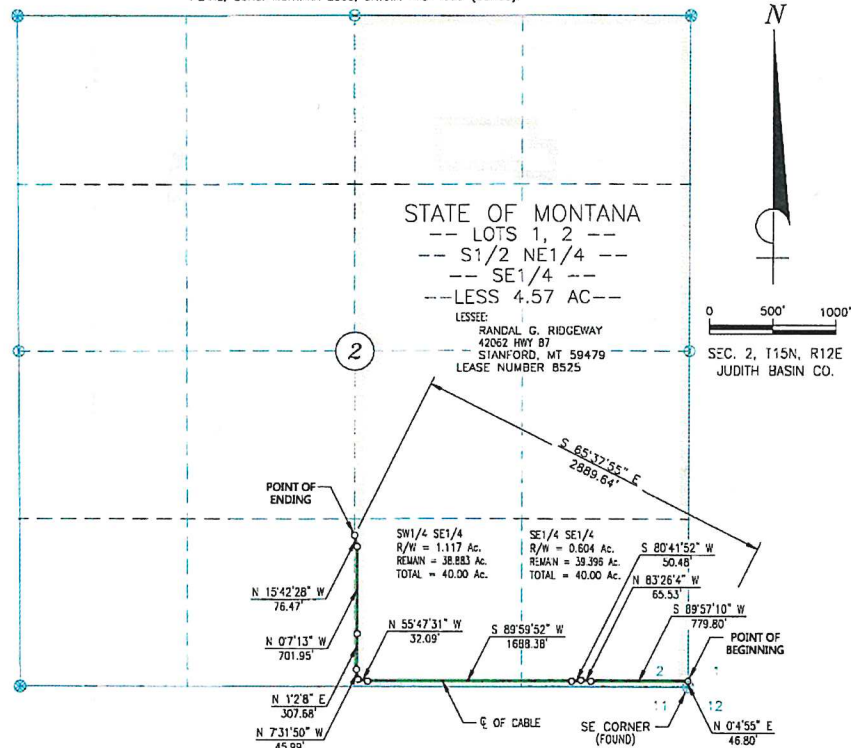
The proposed project will have no significant impact on any culturally unique quality of the area.







NOTE: ALL BEARINGS AND DISTANCES ON SECTIONS ARE TAKEN FROM FIELD GPS DATA CORRECTED IN SYSTEM; US STATE PLANE, ZONE: MONTANA 2500, DATUM: NAD 1983 (CONUS).



DESCRIPTION

A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AN UNDERGROUND TELECOMMUNICATIONS CABLE EXTENDING TWENTY (20.0) FEET IN WIDTH WITH TEN (10.0) FEET ON EACH SIDE OF A CENTERLINE ALL WITHIN THE S1/2 SE1/4 OF SECTION 2, TOWNSHIP 15 NORTH, RANGE 12 EAST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SECTION 2, TOWNSHIP 15 NORTH, RANGE 12 EAST; THENCE NORTH 0°4'55" EAST A DISTANCE OF 46.80 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND EAST BOUNDARY OF THE SE1/4 SE1/4 OF SAID SECTION 2; THENCE ON AND ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE ON A BEARING OF SOUTH 89°57'10" WEST A DISTANCE OF 779.80 FEET; THENCE NORTH 83°26'4" WEST A DISTANCE OF 65.53 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 80°41'52" WEST A DISTANCE OF 50.48 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 89°59'52" WEST A DISTANCE OF 1688.38 FEET; THENCE NORTH 55°47'31" WEST A DISTANCE OF 32.09 FEET; THENCE NORTH 7°31'50" WEST A DISTANCE OF 45.99 FEET; THENCE NORTH 1°2'8" EAST A DISTANCE OF 307.68 FEET; THENCE NORTH 0°7'13" WEST A DISTANCE OF 701.95 FEET; THENCE NORTH 15°42'28" WEST A DISTANCE OF 76.47 FEET TO THE POINT OF ENDING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND WEST BOUNDARY OF THE SW1/4 SE1/4 OF SAID SECTION 2; THENCE SOUTH 65°37'55" EAST A DISTANCE OF 2889.64 FEET TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SECTION 2, TOWNSHIP 15 NORTH, RANGE 12 EAST.

CONTAINED WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED NEW CONSTRUCTION RIGHT-OF-WAY IS 1.721 ACRES MORE OR LESS.

EXHIBIT of RIGHT-OF-WAY on STATE LAND
 Sec. 2, T 15 N, R 12 E, P.M.M.
 JUDITH BASIN CO.

TRIANGLE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE ASSN., INC.
 HAVRE, MONTANA

TTC21512.DWG